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SUBJECT: UN Launches 2009 Consolidated Appeal for the West Bank and Gaza

¶1. (U) Summary: The UN launched the 2009 Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for the West Bank and Gaza on November 26. The USD 462 million appeal focuses on humanitarian response and assistance to an increasing number of vulnerable Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Most of the appeal is for food, cash assistance and emergency job creation. The CAP identifies vulnerable Palestinian groups, particularly those affected by the separation barrier, those in Area C, and women, children, and the elderly. For the first time in its seven years, the CAP also includes protection activities to prevent ongoing displacement. End Summary.

CAP LAUNCHED

¶2. (SBU) At the November 26 launch of the 2009 UN Consolidated Appeal (CAP) for the West Bank and Gaza, UN Resident Humanitarian Coordinator Max Gaylard highlighted Palestinians' rising needs and declining standards of living, which have led to the UN appeal for \$462 million to support relief and recovery programs. He deplored humanitarian conditions in Gaza, saying, "the blockade is an assault on human dignity." Gaylard noted that the CAP was developed in consultation with the PA, NGOs, INGOS, and UN agencies over two months. Over half the CAP is for UNRWA to provide emergency food, cash, job, and health programs to over 1 million refugees in West Bank/Gaza. This year's CAP, he said, also includes protection activities to prevent displacement in vulnerable communities; e.g., in Area C and near the separation barrier. Gaylard said the CAP, which is humanitarian assistance, will support and feed into the PA's development-oriented PRDP.

Challenges to Humanitarian Operations

¶3. (SBU) UNRWA Deputy Commissioner General Filippo Grandi described the operational challenges to delivering humanitarian and development aid; increased movement restrictions; increased needs; and decreasing levels of funding. Rather than focusing on human development, the UN and other NGOs must provide emergency humanitarian relief, he said. Grandi stressed that UNRWA will be unable to deliver even basic services if current restrictions persist and funds continue to be scarce. (Note: UNRWA anticipates a budget shortfall in 2009 of roughly \$160 million. End Note.) During the 5 months of the "tahdiyya" (ceasefire) in Gaza, UNRWA, WFP, and other aid agencies could not replenish food stocks or otherwise prepare for an emergency. Grandi urged the international community to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian conditions and to allow aid agencies to move freely.

CAP Details

¶4. (SBU) The USD 462 million CAP includes 159 projects (96 for NGOs, 63 for UN agencies). Two-thirds of the budget is for relief

and cash assistance. The CAP will respond to reduced standards of living, increased food insecurity, threatened agricultural livelihood, displacement, and deterioration of public services. The CAP's strategic objectives are to 1) provide humanitarian assistance to most vulnerable communities; 2) improve protection of civilians; 3) enhance monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and; 4) strengthen coordination. The main sectors are: food and food security (\$209.5 million), cash for work and cash assistance (\$133.3 million), protection (\$33 million), agriculture (\$25.1 million), and health (\$18.7 million). Gaylard concluded that immediate political intervention and financial support is needed to halt the decline in standards of living and to create a permissive environment for humanitarian agencies to implement relief and recovery programs.